

Congressman Childers Applauds USDA for Rescinding Base Acre Rule

April 2, 2009

Washington, DC - Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) today applauded the USDA for its decision to rescind the rule terminating base acres on federal land. Because of this important action, farmers who lease federal land are again considered eligible to receive payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) on federal land with base acres.

"Farmers' ability to lease federal lands provides vital advantages for the agriculture industry, as well as state and local governments, and I am extremely pleased about the USDA's decision," said Congressman Childers. "Eliminating base acres would have hurt many rural communities in the First Congressional District and throughout Mississippi at a time when state and local governments are already facing severe financial stress. Today's actions will allow farmers and producers in North Mississippi to renew their leases, and will prevent detrimental consequences for rural communities."

The USDA's decision rescinds the part of the Dec. 23, 2008, DCP final rule, which terminated base acreage on federal lands. The rule directed that beginning in crop year 2009, producers who leased federal land would no longer be eligible for DCP payments authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill.

Earlier this year, Congressman Childers sent a letter to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack discussing the negative implications of the rule, and urging him to take action to help farmers and producers decide whether or not to renew their current leases on these lands.

The complete letter is attached.

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